

Redeveloping Contaminated Land in Downtown Middletown

Together, working with area legislators, we secured funding from the Department of Economic and Community Development to remediate and redevelop blighted storefront space at 339 Main Street in Middletown. This cleanup will convert an unusable property into a commercial facility that will generate new jobs and help contribute to Middletown’s continued success and growth in coming years.



Working With Local Business Owners

I co-hosted a regional Subsidized Training & Employment (STEP-Up) Conference to provide area employers with free, valuable assistance and information on utilizing a variety of state programs that will benefit their businesses. The state’s STEP-Up program offers wage subsidies aimed at encouraging local employers to hire new employees, particularly unemployed veterans. For more information about this and other state programs that assist local businesses, visit www.senatedems.ct.gov/GrowJobs.



Cheshire Community Food Pantry—Update

State Representative Mary Fritz and I continue to work with Cheshire’s Paul Bowman and Michelle Piccerillo on the new Cheshire Food Pantry. While funding was originally authorized last winter, the building plans were expanded to better meet the needs of the region. Final approval is forthcoming and we eagerly await the ribbon cutting!

“As a manufacturer of specialty wire and cable, we attempt to stay current on any program that may assist us in maintaining and growing our business. I was very interested in better understanding the apprentice programs that possibly could address our challenges of finding skilled, qualified employees.”

— Mike O’Toole, Q-S Technologies, Meriden

Your State Senator

Danté Bartolomeo

Representing Cheshire, Meriden, Middletown, Middlefield & Rockfall



State Capitol, Room 011, Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: **860-240-0441** or **1-800-842-1420**
www.SenatorBartolomeo.cga.ct.gov

Facebook YouTube Flickr

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD CT
PERMIT NO. 3937

Protecting Your Privacy



News stories about data breaches have become too common. That is why my colleagues and I unanimously passed one of the strongest cybersecurity laws in the nation. The law requires health insurance companies to ensure that customers’ most private data is kept secure by developing comprehensive security programs to safeguard the personal information of their enrollees and insureds. For tips and resources on protecting your identity, use the links provided by the state Department of Consumer Protection at www.ct.gov/dcp under **“Awareness & Prevention.”**

Transparency & Fairness for Electricity Pricing

Growing numbers of electric consumers reported being coaxed, through the lure of low rates, into signing variable-rate contracts. Many testified that soon after the contracts were signed, and without warning, their rates increased significantly and they were charged costly fees to terminate their contracts. Electric customers deserve stable, predictable rates. That is why we passed legislation to **ban variable-rate residential electric contracts beginning October 1, 2015.**

Also, please be aware that state law requires that every residential electric customer’s monthly bill must display his or her rate for the coming month. To file a consumer complaint, contact PURA: **1-800-382-4586** or www.ct.gov/pura.



Lower Taxes for Veterans

Senate Democrats led passage of a tax cut for military veterans. Veterans will no longer pay Connecticut income tax on their military retirement pay. State law used to provide for a 50 percent exemption to retired members of the Armed Forces; now there is a 100 percent exemption. Not only is this the right thing to do for those who fought to defend our freedoms, it also helps keep veterans in our state to build our skilled workforce. Many of today’s growing businesses are looking to hire highly skilled workers with strong leadership abilities, qualities that most veterans possess.



Property Tax Cuts to Save Families & Businesses Hundreds of Millions of Dollars

Whether talking with families, seniors, small-business owners or others in our community, the most frequent concern expressed to me is about property taxes. Historically, state law has limited the ways in which cities and towns can generate revenue almost entirely to property taxes. That's why I am helping lead the charge to limit these crippling taxes.

Cutting Car Taxes

In 2016, **car taxes throughout the state will be capped** at 32 mills, and in 2017 and every year thereafter, the cap will be lowered to 29.36 mills. About one-third of our towns currently have a mill rate of 32 or above, and more than half have a mill rate above 29.36. Statewide, it is estimated that families and businesses will benefit from a

tax cut of more than \$78 million in 2016 and \$107 million in 2017.



Touring downtown Meriden with Erica Steiner, CFO of the Board of Regents for Higher Education.

Increasing Municipal Aid

While the **car tax cap will cut local taxes by hundreds of millions of dollars** throughout the state over the next several years, more needs to be done at the local level to get property taxes under control. Democrats in the General Assembly also created a **new source of revenue for municipalities**. Beginning in 2016, a portion of the Connecticut sales tax revenue, 0.5 percent of the tax, will be **designated to every municipality in the state to help alleviate pressure on the property tax**. To ensure that this additional state aid is utilized by towns and cities for property tax relief rather than additional spending, **we've passed a cap on municipal spending**.

Supporting Family Caregivers



Nearly 500,000 Connecticut residents act as caregivers, and many of them feel unprepared to provide the care needed to keep their loved ones healthy. The CARE Act will help to ensure that caregivers are given follow-up care instructions when a patient is discharged from the hospital. It will also reduce costly hospital readmissions.

The CARE Act requires hospitals to:

- Provide patients with the opportunity to designate a caregiver during their admission;
- Make reasonable attempts to notify the designated caregiver if the patient is to be discharged; and
- Provide the caregiver with instructions on how to perform medication management, wound care, injections or other medical tasks when the patient returns home.

Cracking Down on Concussions

This school year, our student athletes will be better protected from the risks associated with concussions as a result of legislation that I championed. A new "Concussion Education Plan" was given to parents and students, and coaches were provided additional guidance on concussion management. The Concussion Education Plan helps inform parents and students on the signs and symptoms of a concussion, the risks posed by a concussion, how to obtain medical treatment, and how to ensure a safe return to the athletic field.



Fighting to Keep Middlesex Community College in Meriden

When the closings of Middlesex Community College's (MxCC) Meriden Center and Precision Manufacturing Institute were announced, I fought to keep these schools open. With the hard work of MxCC students and our legislative delegation, Meriden Center remains open and the manufacturing program is running out of H.C. Wilcox Technical High School. I have and will continue to meet with key stakeholders to ensure the future of MxCC in downtown Meriden.



Easing the Burden of Testing on High School Students



Until this school year, 11th-graders were overburdened with duplicative tests. In addition to taking the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test, many high school juniors also took the SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement Exams. Senate Democrats led bipartisan passage of legislation

to eliminate the requirement that 11th-grade students take the SBAC test and require instead that they take a nationally recognized test such as the SAT at no cost to the students and their families. This not only reduces over-testing, but it also provides a free college readiness exam for Connecticut's high school students, making college more accessible to all students.

Helping Children with Dyslexia

Thousands of Connecticut children struggle with dyslexia, a learning disability that impacts reading. Our state statutes did not provide guidance to school systems about how to detect and assist students with dyslexia. Families with children facing this learning challenge had nowhere to turn. Senate Democrats led unanimous passage of important legislation that requires the state Department of Education to help parents and boards of education detect and intervene for students with dyslexia.

